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ABSTRACT

Five topics or "realms" of access to education in China are discussed in this paper presented in the form of a panel discussion by four Chinese, one Filipino and one Mauritian graduate student. The scope of the research includes three historical periods: (1) the beginning of the People's Republic of China (PRC) from 1949 until the Cultural Revolution of 1966; (2) the period of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976; and (3) the recent period of reform from 1976 until the present. Following an introductory overview of the topic, the discussants examine five separate factors which have an impact on educational access in the PRC. They include: (1) Family Planning and the number of children in each household; (2) Social Class; (3) Gender and sex discrimination; (4) Language Rights; and (4) Teachers' Rights. Each section describes the impact on educational access by various reform policies instituted by the government during the three historical periods. Special attention is given to a comparison between official government policy and actual implementation. The panelists also draw conclusions about the status of current educational reform efforts and make predictions about educational access until the year 2000. (CFR)

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# FIVE REALMS OF EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

by
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University of California, Santa Barbara

SØØ17085

November 9, 1985

# Five Realms of Educational Rights in the People's Republic of China

A Panel Presentation at the Western Regional Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society

at California State University, Long Beach, November 9, 1985

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(At the time of the presentation, the five panelists were graduate students in the Program in International Education, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Santa Barbara.)

# FIVE REALMS OF EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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## INTRODUCTION

The panel members will address the problems and progress in five realms of educational rights in the People's Republic of China. These five realms are: 1) gender and access to education; 2) language and educational rights; 3) family planning and education; 4) teachers' rights; and 5) social class and access to education. Before we start the discussion on the five realms of educational rights, we will first of all give a brief account on the history and political system of the People's Republic of China since its esbalishement. Then we will introduce an analytical model which is to be used throughout the discussion of each realm of the rights.

The People's Republic of China was established in October 1949, after the Communists won the Civil War (1946-49) with the National Party (Kuomingtang), which was in power then. Since its establishment, the People's Republic of China has always claimed to be a socialist country, which is stated in the Constitution of the PRC, "The People's Republic of China is a socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants" (1982). The principles of the establishment and operation of China are basically in line with Marxist doctrine of a socialist or a communist society. That is, the working class is the leading class in such a society, and the goal of such a society is to eliminate inequality in all aspects of social and economic life among different classes. Because the socialist society proposed by Marx is a societal developmental stage after the stage of capitalism, the abolishment of the privileges of the capitalists, the redistribution of economic and social rights to the working people and the dictatorship of the proletariat to ensure the execution of the working class's rights are considered to be the the most important characteristics of a socialist society.

Since China is primarily an agricultural society with 80% of its population living and working in the rural areas, the government of the PRC formed its principles by combining the Marxist doctrine with the actual conditions of the Chinese society. The main difference between China's socialist society and that proposed by Marx is that China had never experienced a capitalist stage before it went to the stage of socialism. Therefore, the economic structure in China is not industrial but agricultural.

The overall political structure in socialist China is similar to that of different dynasties in ancient China. China is governed by a centralized government. The central government plans and makes policies for the operation and development in almost every aspect of the Chinese

society. Under the socialist system, the state owns all the land as well as industrial, financial, commercial, educational and other enterprises. Nowadays, the Chinese government has adopted more flexible policies in the country's development. However, its socialist nature has not been changed and grass-roots enterprises are still operated in line with the central government's plans and policies. Privately-owned schools were almost unheard of in China a few years ago, but such schools do exist now in China, though in a very limited number. In other words, almost every school at any level is still owned and operated by the state.

Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought have formed guiding ideology for the socialist revolution and socialist construction over past many years. Even though there have been changes in the government's policies in China's economic, cultural and other social development, China still considers Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought to represent its ideological foundation. Marxist materialistic dialectical theory is the philosophical background for the ideology in present China.

Marxist dialectical theory assumes that the contradiction between two forces is the main impetus for societal development. When two forces are in conflict, there will be a struggle between the two forces to achieve a balance. In the process of struggle, the society develops. The Marxist view also holds that the struggle of two conflicting forces is an on-going process. When old contradictions have been resolved, there will be new ones.

In the discussion of educational rights in the People's Republic of China, the panel members have taken dialectical theory into consideration and proposed an analytical model to address the issue of human rights. The assumption underlying the model is that any right is the opposite of one or more other rights. In other words, for each right advocated by someone, there is one or more other rights with which it is in conflict. Therefore, in discussing educational rights, we need to first of all define the rights and analyze the rights represented by two or more sides.

Another assumption the panel members hold is that people — whether individually or as a group — seek to maximize the rights which they value and believe. Conflicts arise in societies over rights because of the efforts of individuals or groups to maximize privileges for themselves or for others whom they consider worthy and ill-treated. Therefore, one way of analyzing developments in the realms of educational rights is in terms of conflicts in the interests of different social groups.

The third assumption underguiding the model is that conflicts over educational rights have their social, historical and political reasons. The panel members do not intend to take sides over the issue of which individual's or group's rights are violated and how their interests should be fought for or protected. The panel's purpose is descriptive rather than evaluative. So the panel will present the conflicts as they are and try to explore them from a developmental perspective. Hopefully, this approach will serve as a kind of background for the

prediction of future trend. In order to present a picture in progress, the discussion will describe the five realms of educational rights as they existed during three historical periods:

1) 1949-1966 The beginning of the People's Public of China in 1949 until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966.

2) 1966-1976 The period of the Cultural Revolution.

3) 1976-1985 The most recent period, since the end of the Cultural Revolution.

## AN ANALYTICAL MODEL FOR THE FIVE REALMS OF EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

I. Definition of the Educational Rights Being Claimed by Each Side in Conflict.

A) Identify the public rationale used by each side to support its case.
B) Estimate the nature of unstated motives underlying the rationale.
C) Define the nature of the rights being claimed by each side in conflict.

II. Comparisons between Official Policy and Actual Conditions.

A) Describe the government's official policy regarding the realm of rights.
B) Compare how well actual conditions in the society match the policy.
C) Estimate the reasons for the extent of agreement between policy and actual conditions.

III. Estimation of the Future Trends.

A) Draw conclusions about the present status of the realm of rights.
B) Describe the effect of the conflict on the society.
C) Identify the problems each side in the conflict faces in pursuing its goals.
D) Estimate the likely outcome of the conflict during the remainder of the 20th century.

# FAMILY PLANNING AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY IN MAINLAND CHINA

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## I. Introduction

Mainland China is the world's first "demographic billionaire" (Tien, 1983), containing almost one fourth of the human race (Willey, 1984). But since it only has seven percent of the total cultivated land area of the earth, the population problem is obvious.

The vice-minister of Communist China's cabinet, Chi Pon-Fei, stated: "To have planned control of our population is a long-term strategic mission. We must work hard to limit the total population within 1.2 billion at the end of this century.... The rapid growth of population has caused serious difficulties for people to get enough food, clothing, house, transportation, health care, education and jobs. It makes the country's poverty and backwardness very hard to remedy...." (Wang, 1981).

Chi's statement represents the opinion of people who are concerned about the education as well as other rights of the masses from a pratical point of view. According to these people, a nationwide family plan is absolutely necessary. However, there are individuals who care more about the right of (1) deciding the number of their own children, (2) private control over their own birth plan, and (3) the fetus to be born. These people regard the family and the individual as private units that should have freedom to make decision about their own lives. Thus, there is a conflict in China over two sets of rights: (1) the rights for the masses to have a higher living standard, including better educational opportunity, through the national family planning, and (2) the rights for individuals to make their own family plan.

This paper will analyze the relationship between the population policy and population growth in mainland China since 1949, then will report the proportion of educational attainment of the population. These facts may support Chi's point of view: if the total population will not be controlled, the educational opportunity will be hard to increase. It will also describe the methods currently employed in mainland China to implement the family planning, which may be the main reasons for individuals being against the national family planning. Finally, the paper will estimate the possible outcome of the conflict between these two sides.

## II. A Historical Review of Mainland China's Population Policy and Population Growth (1949-1985)

In mainland China, population growth gives rise to government concern and policy. The following stages describe the relation between population policy and population growth in mainland China from 1949 to 1985 (see figure 1 and 2).

### 1. First Stage: 1949-1952

During this period of time, population policy was aimed at reducing mortality and directly or indirectly encouraging births (Tien, 1983). People believed that the larger the population, the greater the total production. According to Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong, "Large population is a great property, and a vast power of production. It can refresh the life and the culture of the new China.... (Wang, 1983)". He also proclaimed that "of all things in the world, people are the most precious... As long as there are people, every kind of miracle can be performed (Tien, 1983)". Consequently, the average rate of natural increase (birth rate minus death rate) for these 4 years was 18.75 per thousand (China Official Annual Report 1982/83). Compare to the average annual growth rate of 2.5 per thousand for the 109 years from 1840 to 1949, the difference is apparent (Qian, 1983).

### 2. Second Stage: 1953-1957

The results of the 1953 census showed that the total population in mainland China was more than 587 million, with an annual growth rate of 23 per thousand. This did draw the government's attention. Abortion was legalized in 1953. Shao Li-Tsu proposed family planning in the People's Conference in September, 1954; and the first birth-planning campaign was launched in 1956. During these 5 years, the average annual growth rate was 22.37 per thousand (China Official Annual Report 1982/83), even higher than during the first stage. This might be due to the fact that family planning was not implemented on a nationwide basis.

### 3. Third Stage: 1958-1961

The first birth-planning campaign came to an end with the start of the Great Leap Forward in 1958 (ended 1961). The government again believed that mainland China only had the problem of a lack of laborers, but not the problem of excess population. As long as the labor force was large enough, production could be increased. So the population policy during this time was to encourage births (Wang, 1983). However, the average annual growth rat for these 4 years was only 4.15 per thousand (China Official Annual Report, 1982/83). This low natural increase rate was not due to the success of family planning, since that had stoped during the Great leap Forward;

but the low birth rate and high death rate resulted from political and economic disorder.

4. Fourth Stage: 1962-1965

The second family-planning program started in 1962. After the miscalculations of the Great Leap Forward and the following crop failures and famine, the government realized that in order to solve the problem of insufficient food, family planning had to be emphasize. However, since the population policy was unstable, the average annual growth rate was 29.23, a very high figure for these 4 years.

5. Fifth Stage: 1966-1976

The second family planning program totally stopped after the start of the Culture Revolution in 1966. From 1966 to 1970, the average annual growth rate was 26.29 per thousand. In 1971, the government started the third, wan (late marriage) xi (long interval between children), shao (fewer children) family-planning program. The government restrained couples from having more than three children in 1972. The extra children could not be included in the households, and could not get rationed food and clothing Women who were having their fourth child were forced to have abortions. In 1973, the limit on the number of children in each family was reduced to two instead of three. In the same year, the government started a nationwide birth plan, which specified the number of children allowed to be born within a year. The average annual growth rate in these years (1971-1976) was successfully reduced to 18.75 per thousand.

6. Six Stage: 1977-1985

Hua Kuo-Feng reported in the Fifth National People's Congress in 1978: "... We must decrease the natural increase rate of population to less than 10 per thousand in three years". The launching of the one-child campaign in early 1979 intensified the already strong family planning program. In the 1979 second meeting of the Fifth National People's Congress, Chen Mu-Hua, head of the Birth planning Leading Group proposed two stages in the future : first, to decrease the natural increase rate to 5 per thousand in 1985; second, to reduce the natural increase rate to 0 in 2000 (Wang, 1983). The Sixth five-Year Plan (1981-1985) approved by the National people's Congress in December 1982 stipulates that (1) the total population be kept below 1.06 billion by 1985, the birth rate at 19 per thousand population, and the rate of natural increase to 13 per thousand, and (2) population planning also be introduced in ethnic minority areas (Tien, 1983). The average natural growth rate during the years from 1977 to 1981 is only 12.21 (China Official Annual Report 1982/83).

As can be seen, mainland China did not achieve a significant

degree of success in family planning until the start of the wan xi shao family-planning program in 1971. Now that we have reviewed the population policy and population growth rate in mainland China since 1949. We will examine the relationship of population size to educational opportunity in mainland China.

## III. Population and Educational Opportunity

The 1982 census provided the latest statistics on educational attainment of the population. Only 0.6 percent of the population, or just over 6 million people, had some university education. About 6.6 percent, or 66.5 million people, had at least some senior-middle-school education. Another 17.7 percent of the total population, or 178.3 million people, had some junior-middle-school education. For the primary-school level the percentage was 35.3, or 355.2 million people. The census also reported that 235.8 million people aged 12 and older, 23.5 percent of the total population, declared themselves as illiterate or semi-illiterate (Foreign Broadcast Information Service, FBIS, 1982).

The above figures were judged unacceptable for a nation that aspired to universal schooling. To augment educational opportunity, mainland China has to: (1) expand educational facilities rapidly, and (2) control the growth of the population. This consequence, as we stated at the beginning, supports the opinion of those people who advocate nationwide family planning. Now we will move on to a description of the methods used to propagate family planning in mainland China.

## IV. Methods Employed in Family planning

As we pointed out earlier, family planning was not successful until the wan-xi-shao program started in 1971. Since that year, the family planning program has become more and more rigorous. And the annual natural growth rate, as a consequence, has become smaller and smaller.

Basically, the implementation of family planning is a national issue. Overall population plans and reproduction norms are set at the national level, shaped by the nation's ability to feed, cloth, and shelter the people, and to improve living standards. National policy is passed down through successive levels to be translated into actual programs suited to local conditions. Leaders at all levels are held responsible for achieving birth planning goals. Individual couples are rewarded or penalized depending on their cooperation. Birth planning is promoted through every feasible channel, from mass information to small group and personal meetings where strong peer pressure is exerted (see figure 3 and 4)(Qian, 1983).

The family-planning codes for different provinces are similar to each other. The following is an typical example in Fu-Chien

province (Wang, 1983; Tien, 1984; Collier's Encyclopedia, 1984):

1. In rural areas, marriage is prohibited for males under 25 and females under 23. In urban areas, the ages for marriage are males 26, females 24.

2. The government strongly encourages one-child families and two children are the largest permitted. If accidental preganancy occurs, the local authorities have been known to insist on compulsory abortion followed by insertion of an IUD (intra-unterine device) or sterilization.

3. The government gives rewards such as better health care, better educational oportunity, and greater financial support to couples who are willing to have one child only.

4. The government offers free health care for abortion and supplies of contraception.

5. The leaders at all levels will be reward or punished according to the results of family planning in his respon-sible area.

The methods and policy stated above have been proved to have great effectiveness on population control. The national family planning contributes directly or indirectly increase educational opportunity for the masses. However, strong critism to induce birth control, sterilization, and abortion are made from the individuals who concern about their rights of having their own family planning.

## V. Conclusion

Although mainland China has successfully decreased the growth rate of the population recent years, she still has to worry about population growth in the future. This becomes especially true when people who were born in the "baby boom years" (1962-1970) have or will have reached the marriage age. Thus, we may expect that mainland China will continue the current one-child family planning for the near future, so that people will have more chance to attend school as well as more of other oportunities. However, the conflict over two sets of rights between the advocates and the opponents of the family-planning program will still exist. Thus, we can expect these opposing groups to continue argueing their side of the case in terms of what they regard as the overriding right -- national population control versus the personal right to determine one's own family size.

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FIGURE 1 China's population in selected years

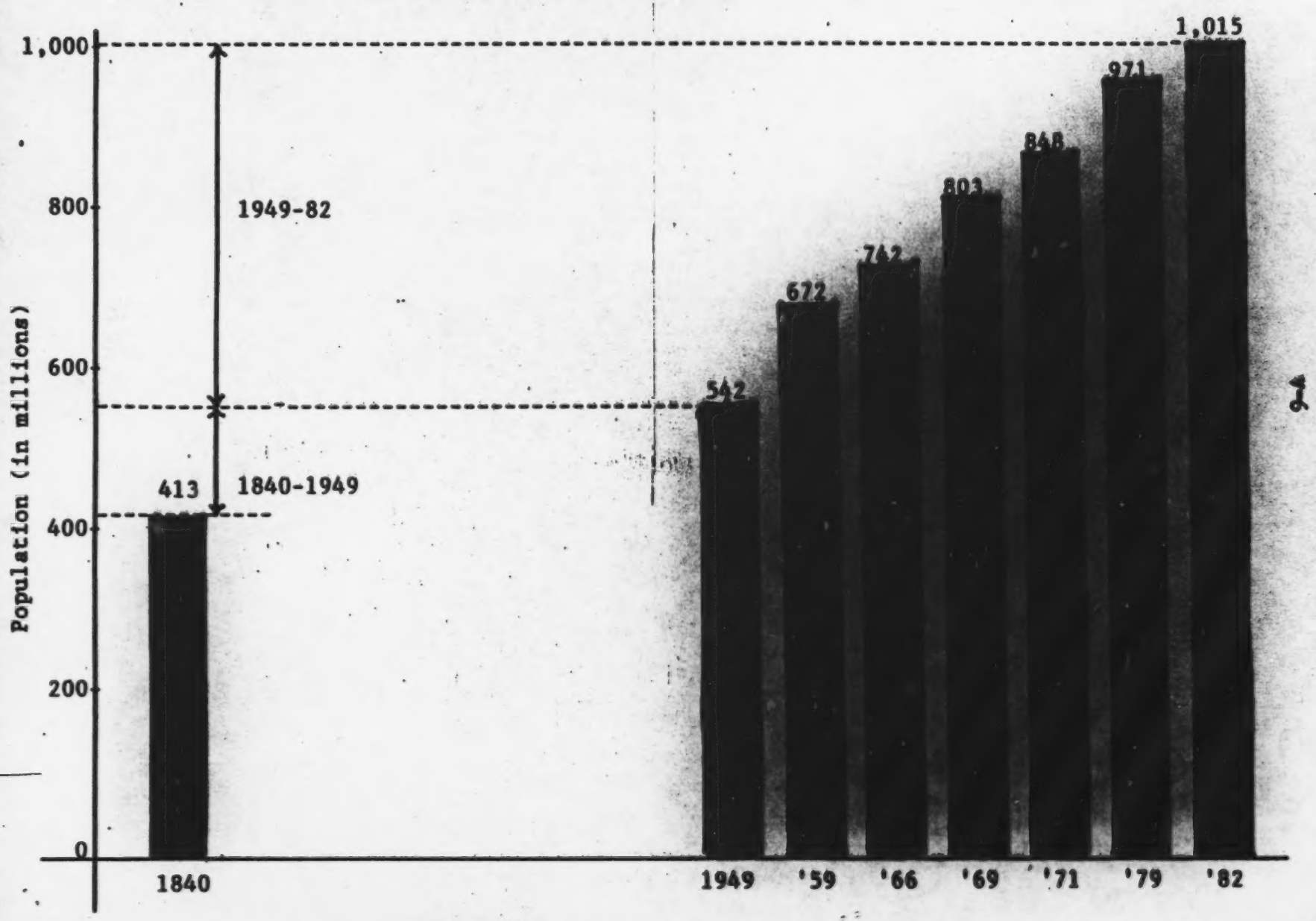


FIGURE 2 Birth, Death, and Natural Increase Rates : China, 1949-1982

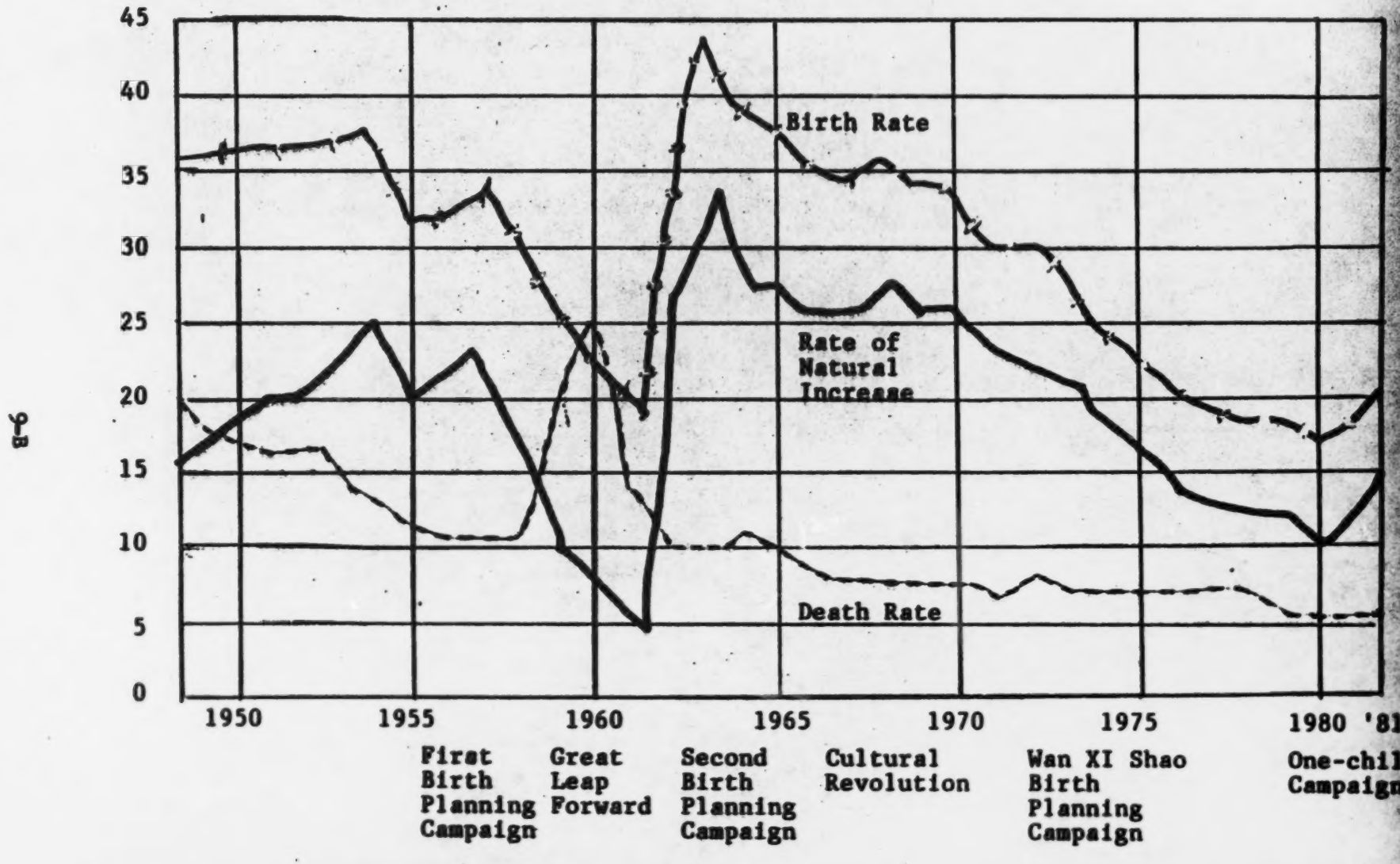
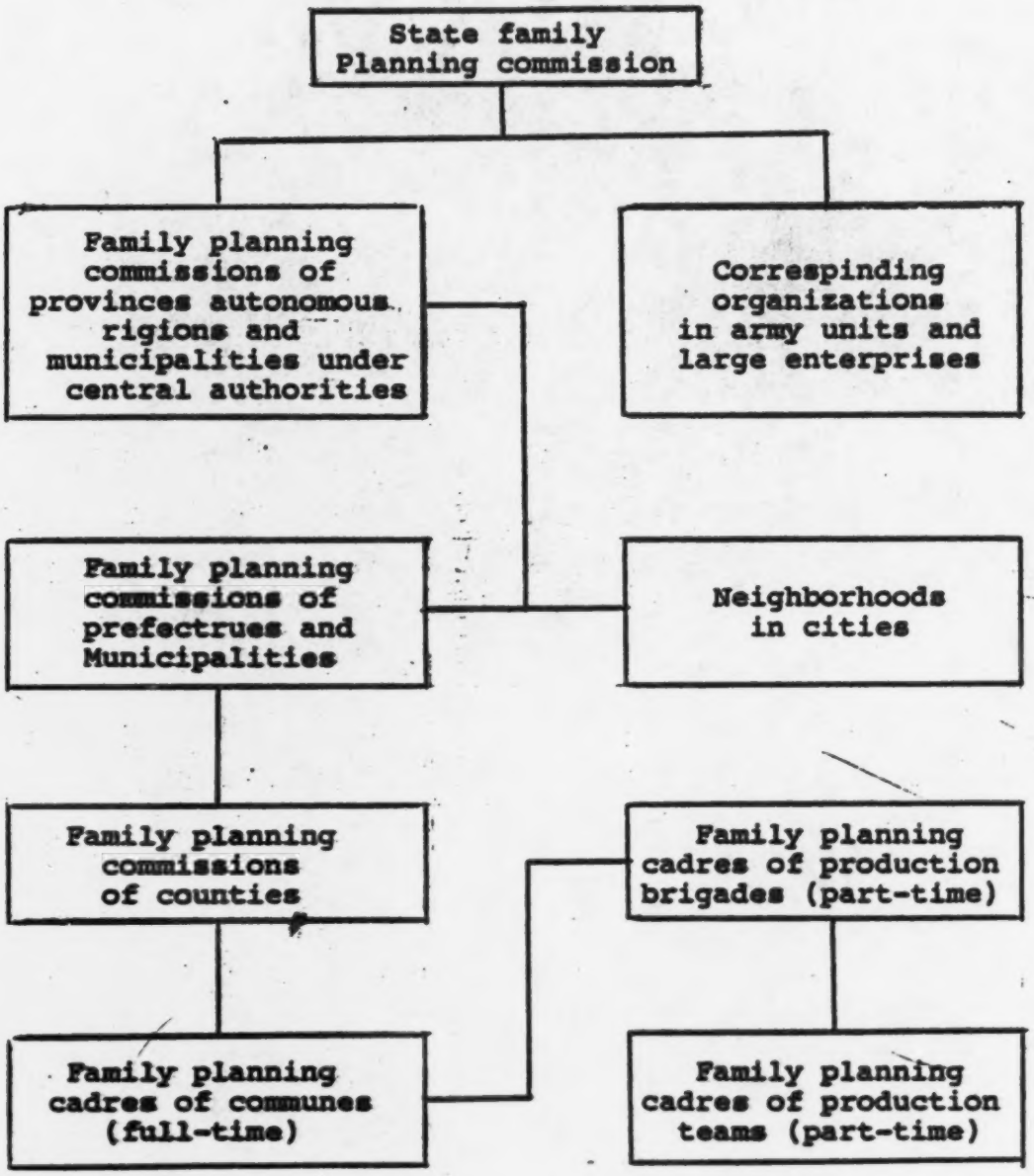
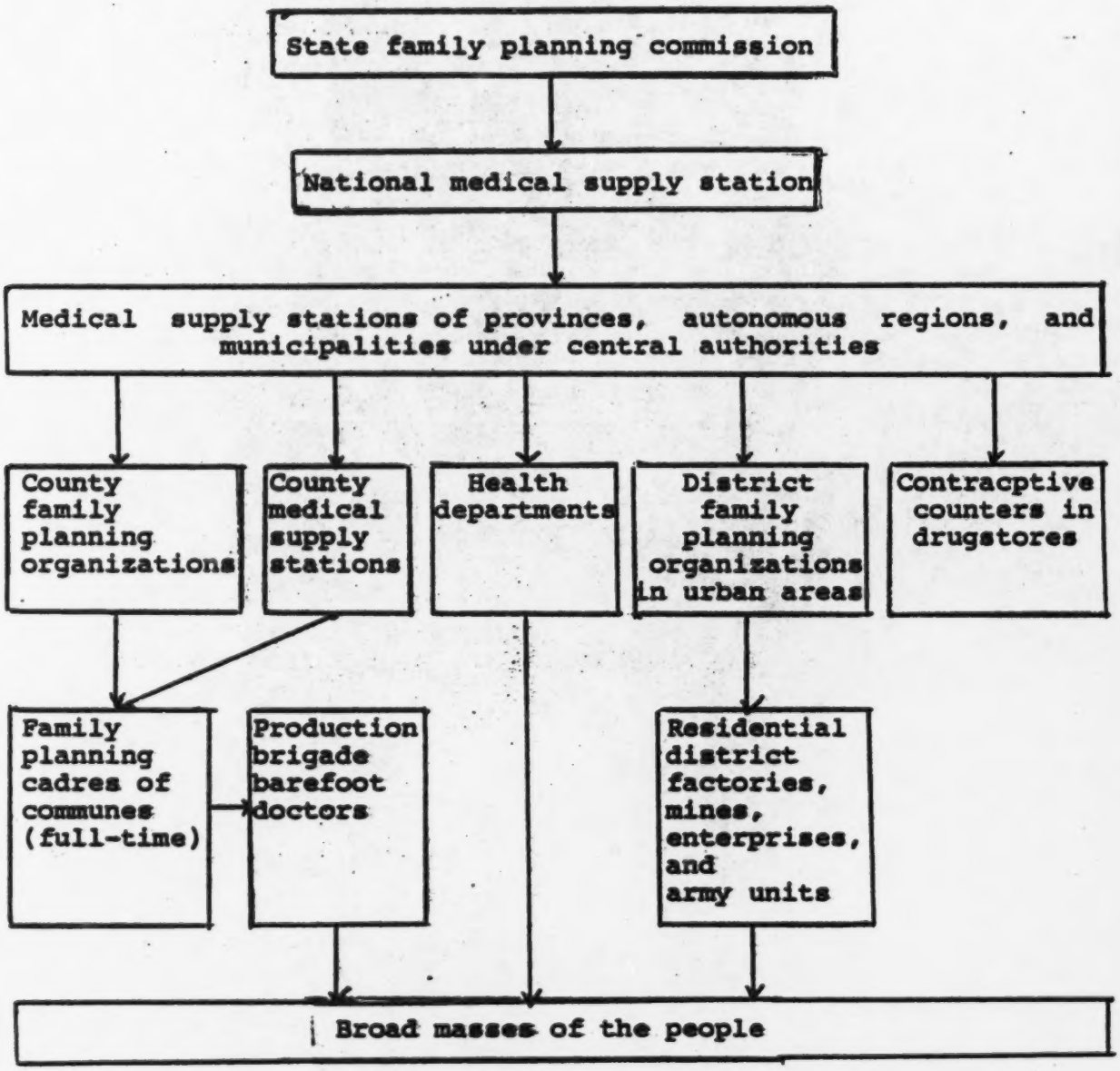


FIGURE 3: Organizations And Teams That Conduct Family Planning Work in Mainland China


State family Planning commission
Family planning commissions of provinces autonomous rigions and municipalities under central authorities
Correspinding organizations in army units and large enterprises
Family planning commissions of prefectrues and Municipalities
Neighborhoods in cities
Family planning commissions of counties
Family planning cadres of production brigades (part-time)
Family planning cadres of communes (full-time)
Family planning cadres of production teams (part-time)

9-C

FIGURE 4: Contraceptive Delivery System in Mainland China


State family planning commission
National medical supply station
Medical supply stations of provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities under central authorities
County family planning organizations
County medical supply stations
Health departments
District family planning organizations in urban areas
Contracptive counters in drugstores
Family planning cadres of communes (full-time)
Production brigade barefoot doctors
Residential district factories, mines, enterprises, and army units
Broad masses of the people

Source: Qian Xinzhong, China's Population Policy: Theory and Methods, Studies in family Planning, Vol.14, No.12, Dec. 1983

# SOCIAL CLASS AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION

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The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between social classes and educational opportunities in the People's Republic of China. First of all, the terms social class and access to education will be defined to give a clear description of the scope of the present study. The term social class is self-explanatory. Although socialist China aims at eliminating the inequalities and eventually differences among classes, it used this term extensively over the past many years to indicate the economic status and occupation of individuals. For instance, workers, peasants, and other people engaged in manual labor, who constitute the majority of the population, are often referred to as members of the working class.

The term access to education is used to indicate the opportunities of individuals to enter public education. There are many forms, levels, types and fields of education. Since elementary education and secondary education in many parts of China are compulsory and open to almost every school age child, the present study will focus on educational opportunities to higher education, where the issue of access is more pronounced.

## The Class Nature of Education

What is the relationship between social classes and access to education in China? Even though there is no official policy that advocates an inequality of access to education based on students' class background, such a problem frequently exists in China, as it may exist in almost any society. In the past, greater access was available to people of higher classes, who considered it their privilege or right. However, owing to the socialist nature of China, the government tries to compensate for past differences of access and resolve the problem of social class and access to education by giving preference to members of the formerly deprived and oppressed classes. Generally speaking, more opportunities have been provided to members of the working class than to members of other social classes. This practice may be explained by the socialist nature of the country. Based on Marxist-Leninist dialectical materialism, the "class nature" of education had been emphasized in China until recent years. This class nature was clearly stated as one of the major educational objectives.

On September 29, 1949, just before the official establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese People's First Political Consultative Conference pointed out in its "Common Outline" that "the reformation of old educational systems, curricula, and teaching methodology should be planned and carried out step by step," new educational systems would gradually be established to facilitate "education in the service of the proletariat", and "education in the service of socialist economic reconstruction" (Wang, 1972). This guiding policy in education was further explained in a resolution adopted at the First National Conference of Education in December, 1949. The resolution stated that "the door of

schools should be open to workers and peasants, and education should serve the needs of production" (Wang, 1972).

The objectives of serving the working people and production have always been emphasized in present-day Chinese education. These two objectives have been considered as the primary differences between Chinese old educational systems and the new educational systems. The present study will focus on the class nature of education, because it is more relevant to the present topic.

Social Class Origins and University Enrolment

The system of enrolling students in universities and collleges in China is not only conceived as the connecting link between high school and university education but also as an educational process in itself, with concentration on both academic and ideological criteria. Since the founding of the People's Republic, entrance to colleges and universities has not been confined to high school graduates only. Special arrangements have been made to ensure the admission of worker-peasant elements in order to create a corps of intellectuals who will serve the needs of Chinese economic development and to raise the quality of leadership in the party and government. To provide a developmental picture, the present study will address the issue in three different historical periods since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

1949-1966

Before the revolution in 1949, frequent wars and famines made the average Chinese people, most of them peasants, live in unrest and poverty. Even though Chinese culture emphasized the importance of learning and respected scholars, most people literally were more concerned about how to survive than how to become a learned scholar. As a result, during the early years of the People's Republic, the general literacy level was very low — approximately 20% of the whole population (Hawkins,1983), while the state had an urgent need for qualified manpower for its economic development. To meet this need, the government was trying to mobilize the efforts of the whole nation to reconstruct China's economy. People with some educational background were specially appreciated. In the admission of college students, no restriction based on social origin were advocated, even though in practice counter-revolutionary elements were usually excluded. Generally speaking, the government tried to tap talent wherever it might be found.

The initial requirement for entering colleges and universities was a level of scholarship equivalent to that of high school graduation. Until the mid-1950s there was a shortage of qualified high school graduates for colleges and universities. In order to improve this situation, China operated two kinds of high schools simultaneously: one was the ordinary high schools for school age young people and the other was rapid high schools for workers and peasants who had not had the opportunities to go to ordinary high schools. This approach of operating two kinds of high school in the 1950s was not only to supply colleges and universities with enough qualified candidates, but also to ensure that workers and peasants would not be deprived of their access to higher education because they lacked educational opportunities in the past.

Since measures were taken to ensure the entry of worker-peasant elements to higher education, many workers and peasants studied in colleges, including those institutions with some prestige. It was estimated that in 1956-57 students of worker and peasant origins represented 34 per cent of those enrolled in higher education. Their number in the comprehensive universities in the major cities was 10 to 20 per cent while the percentage in teacher training and agriculture and forestry institutes in the provincial cities was considerably higher (Taylor, 1981). It seems that the government in China made some special efforts to ensure that people from different social background would have an equal access to higher education, especially people from the working classes.

The mere presence of students of worker and peasant origins did not ensure the adequate performance of these students in college: some of these students had problems to stay in college. These problems were associated with their previous training, home background or financial means. Owing to their relatively inadequate academic background, a certain portion of the worker-peasant elements seemed not to be able to meet the normal standard of university education. In 1958 a Chinese resource referred to the introduction of special classes in universities to enable worker and peasant elements to reach the standard of their fellow students (Taylor, 1973). In the period between 1949 and 1966, academic and ideological qualities were the major two criteria for university enrolment. It seemed that students of worker-peasant origins were given more opportunities than a mere equal opportunity to enter institutions of higher education, even though their study was limited to certain fields owing to their previous training.

In 1958 a political campaign — the Great Leap Forward — was launched in China as an attempt to speed China's economic growth. Great emphasis was given to raising the political consciousness of the masses with the intention that ideology would help enhance the nation's revolutionary enthusiasm in production. The intentions, however, were not based on the practical conditions in China. Therefore, this campaign was basically a failure. In 1961, realizing the problems in the Great Leap Forward, the government once more realized the importance of acquiring advanced technology for China's economic development. Consequently, in the educational field, more emphasis was placed on the quality of education. The Central Cultural Educational Subcommittee proposed four objectives in education: readjustment, consolidation, development and improvement. In 1962, the "Temporary Work Regulations Governing Full-time Primary and Intermediate Schools" clearly devoted its attention to "disregarding class struggle, giving first place to academic learning, emphasizing the main functions of teaching and learning, and opposing promotion of politics" (Wang, 1972).

Even though educational institutions used academic performance as the initial criterion in enrolling students in the early 60s, enrolment figures showed that institutions of higher education did not adopt a deliberate policy of excluding students of worker and peasant origins; the primary intention was to select students on the basis of purely academic criteria. In 1962 the Peking Review reported that "half of China's total university enrolment is of worker or peasant origin" (Taylor, 1973).

If we consider the proportion of workers and peasants in the nation's whole population, we might say that students of worker or peasant origin were underrepresented in higher education. However, since no deliberate measures were taken to discourage members of any social group from attending the university based on their social class, it seems appropriate to conclude that the issue of social class and educational opportunites seemed not to present any serious problems during the period of 1949 and 1966. The government did provide more opportunities to the proletarian elements in society, but generally speaking, it seemed more concerned with tapping talent than carrying out class struggle in the educational field. Therefore, the issue of social class and access to higher education was not considered as a primary issue in the educational field between 1949 and 1966.

1966-1976

In 1966, the late chairman of the Communist Party of China, Mao Zedong, assumed that China was following the path of the Soviet Union. He held the view that if China did not continue the proletarian revolution, capitalism would be restored in China. In order to maintain the socialist nature of China, the Cultural Revolution was started in 1966. The objective of the revolution was to carry out the principles of Marxism and Leninism, that is, to carry on class struggle in socialist China and to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. Education had always been regarded as an important tool to educate the whole nation and implement the party's policies. As a result, the two primary objectives in education were reexamined to ensure that education would serve proletarian politics and be combined with productive labor. The emphasis on training qualified manpower merely for China's economic development was then criticized as an incorrect point of view because it ignored the political nature of education. Tapping talent disregarding the social and political background of individuals was criticized as a measure taken by the bourgeois intellectuals to shut the majority of workers and peasants out of universities and colleges. To restore the the class nature and political emphasis of education, an educational revolution was thus started.

The cultivation of the working class was emphasized in the Cultural Revolution as the major objective of socialist educaiton. Mao Zedong's comments on the objectives of education was the theoretical foundation of educational policies: "our educational principles should boost development of the various aspects of moral, physical and intellectual training in students so that they may become cultured workers with an awareness of socialism" (Mao, 1957). To ensure the proletarian nature of Chinese educational institutions, the worker-peasant masses were encouraged to take over education. The May 7 Directive, which is considered to be the guiding policy for the Cultural Revolution, stated that "the Chinese Communists must no longer leave schools under the control of the bourgeois elements," and "the furtherance of the proletarian educational revolution relies upon the masses of revolutionary students, teachers, and workers" (The May 7 Directive, 1966). While proposing that the workers and peasants should take over the leadership in schools, the function of intellectuals was completely ignored. Since intellectuals were considered not to belong to the proletarian class, they were critisized in the Cultural Revolution as tools of capialist restoration, and therefore, could not be trusted with the task of cultivating the working class. Many intellectuals were forced

to do manual labor rather than their usual jobs, because manual labor was thought of as a necessary process for the intellectuals to learn from the working class people and to improve their political ideology.

Since many professors and teachers in higher educational institutions were criticized as bourgeouis intellectuals and thus sent to factories and communes to learn from the worker-peasant masses, colleges and universities were closed down. Between 1966 and 1970, institutes of higher learning in China discontinued enrolment of new students. In the fall of 1970, enrolment was partly resumed. The enrolment policy then was to select students from the workers, peasants, soldiers or high school graduates who had worked in factories or communes for two years. The methods of university enrolment were basically selection and recommendation. The selection of the students was based on the students' moral and political attributes, social-class backround, and judgments of fellow workers and peasants. Nation-wide entrance examinations were abolished, although in some years entrance examinations were used to estimate the candidates' academic level. Even in these years, test results were not the determining factor in selecting a student.

The enrolment practice before the Cultural Revolution was severely criticized for its deliberate efforts of discrimination against students from workers and peasants. This point of view was based on the argument that academic performance was overly emphasized. By advocating that everyone had an equal access to higher education on the basis of academic performance, the bourgeios intellectuals made the students from worker or peasant origin less competitive than students from intellectual families or other families with better financial and educational background. In order to correct this unfair treatment of the worker-peasant elements, priority should be given to them in the Cultural Revolution.

This enrolment policy was also based on the prevailing political ideology in the Cultural Revolution. The primary objective of the Cultural Revolution was to continue class struggle and to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therefore, workers and peasants were considered to be the major forces in Chinese revolution while people from other social classes were supposed to be educated by workers and peasants, improve their political ideology and finally become a member or a close friend of the working class. In college enrolment preferences were naturally given to students of worker or peasant origin. The majority of the college students in the Cultural Revolution were from the so-called Five Red Catelogies that consisted of workers, poor peasants, soldiers, revolutionary cadres and other laboring people. Students from other social background were enrolled in a very limited number. Many students from other social background were denied the opportunities to university merely because of their non-revolutionary social classes. These classes included landlord, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, criminals, rightists, administrators who took capitalist road, bourgeois intellectuals, ect. In short, it was difficult for students from non-worker-peasant classes to attend college.

The enrolment standards and other educational policies in the Cultural Revolution caused many problems in China's higher education. Since academic study was discouraged, the quality of education was in question. Since professors and teachers were often reminded of their non-

revolutionary nature, their motivation and attitude towards their work were greatly affected. Many students graduated with little knowledge in their major field, which appeared to be harmful for the economic development in China. On the other hand, enroling students based merely on their social background and political ideiology wasted a lot of talent.

In summary, social origins and political ideology were determining factors in university enrolment during the Cultural Revolution. Academic background and performance of the students were generally ignored. The state did not officially propose any exclusion of students from any social class, but the prevailing political ideology made it impossible for students from certain social classes to have the access to higher education. Students from worker and peasant origins were guaranteed more opportunities to education than students from any other social classes.

1976-1985

The Cultural Revolution ended in 1976. Both the Chinese people and the Chinese government once again realized the importance of education in the country's economic development. The Eleventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China in August 1977 marked the beginning of a period of intense preparation for national development and modernization (Lofstedt, 1980). In 1979 the Party officially declared that its major task in the socialist period was not to carry out class struggle but to facilitate economic development in China. In order to realize the goals of modernization, China needs advanced techonology. The basis for this is to raise the scientific and cultural levels of the people.

University enrolment policy was reexamined after the Cultural Revolution. On October 20, 1977, enrolment reforms were announced by the Ministry of Education (Smerling, 1979). Entrance examinations to higher education were reintroduced. The major changes from the enrolment policy of the Cultural Revolution may be summarized as follows: 1) stated criteria for admission to higher education continued to be moral, intellectual, and physical qualifications, but renewed emphasis was given to knowledge or academic aptitude; 2) rather than select all candidates from high school graduates under 25 years old who have worked at least two years in the countryside or in a factory, two additional pools of acceptable candidates were identified: people above 25 years old with special skills or good job experience; and 2) high school graduates who have performed exceptionally well in their studies (Karr, 1978).

The difference between the present enrolment policy and that in the Cultural Revolution is quite obvious. The major difference is the reemphasis of academic criteria in university enrolment. Since academic criteria are the primary determining factors, students from all social background are given the opportunity to attend the college entrance examinations. The selection of students is based on the students' performance in the examinations rather than students' social background, political ideology or working experience.

Comparing the present university enrolment policy with the policy in the period between 1949 and 1966, it is not difficult to notice that the policies are very similar. Academic performance is considered as the primary requirement for higher education. Students who can meet the

enrolment criteria have equal access to higher education. However, there are also some changes, the major ones being (1) no special efforts are made by the government to ensure a certain portion of students from worker-peasant origins to enter college; (2) even though ideological factor is still mentioned as one of the major criteria in enrolling students, in practice academic factors play a more important role; and (3) there are far more high school graduates than the colleges and universities can take, thus the competition to go to college is more fierce than during any period before 1976.

Problems and Developmental Trends

The present enrolment policy is to ensure the quality of higher education and to select the students who have the greatest potential of academic success. Emphasis on the class nature of Chinese education seems to have decreased, which is in line with the Party's overall policy in China's development. It seems that the present policy helps the country to discover the talent and encourage young people to succeed in academic fields.

But this does not mean that there is no problem in the issue of social classes and access to education. It is not difficult to imagine that a peasant's child and an intellectual's child may grow up in very different environments. Even though both children finish high school, the quality of education may vary between a well-developed urban school and a remote rural school. The financial conditions in the two families may also influence the children's education. With the new economic policies in the countryside, most peasants need more manpower to develop their family economy. Thus the peasant's child may possibly be encouraged to drop school before he graduates. Even though the enrolment policy treats students equally based on academic performance, other social factors may still affect students from the working class.

Despite the problems, if China continues to strive for its modernization plan, the enrolment policy will likely undergo very little change in the next 10 or 15 years. This assumption is based on an analysis of the practical conditions in China. First of all, China will continue to have a great demand for people who are knowledgable or skillful in advanced science and technology to carry out its modernization plan. Institutions of higher education will continue to select students with good academic training and learning aptitude because these students are supposed to learn the subject matters faster than students with poor training. Second, even though the number of colleges and universities has increased, the demand for higher education still exceeds the supply. To play a fair game in enrolling students, academic performance seems to be the most acceptable criterion in Chinese society. Third, since the People's Republic has been founded for more than 36 years and considerable efforts have been made to raise the educational level of people from all social background, it seems not as necessary as in the early years of the republic to give priority to members from certain social classes. Fourth, China's present overall policy is to emphasize economic development rather than class struggle. Under 36 years of socialist system, many of the old social classes no longer exist in China. Unless the state wants to redivide the nation into different classes, the concept of giving priority to or discriminating against certain classes which no longer exist in China seems not

appropriate in China today.

In conclusion, how China will solve the problems of providing educational opportunities to people from all social groups and ensure the quality of its edcuation is still a question. The future development will answer the question. The present study is an attempt to present the issue of social class and access to higher education in a progressive manner so that some predictions may be made about the direction of further development.

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# GENDER AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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In adopting a dialectical perspective toward the issue of gender as related to the right to education in mainland China, we can define the two opposing viewpoints in the dialectical exchange as: (1) the traditional right of males to superior educational opportunities versus (2) recently issued policies declaring that both sexes deserve equal access to education. The purpose of this paper is to inspect the interaction of these opposing positions over the past several decades in order to show which position has dominated in terms of stated social policy and how adequately such policy has been implemented in practice.

Throughout this discussion, the term educational opportunity refers to the right of access to formal education at all levels and in all fields, implying therefore that there are no specifically male-oriented or female-oriented subjects. Formal education means primary, secondary, and tertiary schooling, plus on-the-job training.

## Background of the Conflict

China has had a long established tradition of men assuming the role of rulers, enjoying not only greater power and prestige but also favored access to education. Women were pictured as sufficiently inferior to men in intellectual ability and emotional composition to relegate them to subservient, dependent roles. Educational opportunities for women were hampered by this tradition, together with a shortage of educational facilities. And the limited number of girls who did have an opportunity to attend school were encouraged to take such "female subjects" as sewing and cooking rather than pursuing studies in male-dominated fields, particularly the scientific professions.

However, since the early years of the 20th century, following the revolution against the Manchu rulers, a growing number of Chinese women have sought equal educational opportunities at all levels in order to improve their social status and gain access to higher-level political, cultural, economic, and legal positions. As a consequence, the superior power and privilege that men traditionally enjoyed has been threatened. This divergence in interests between the two sexes has given rise to a conflict. On one side, a majority of women and some of their male supporters have claimed equal educational rights for women. On the other side, a majority of men and some women who adhere to traditional female roles have resisted such claims. An important category of traditional women who are against women's equal rights are mothers-in-law, since they traditionally have accepted the responsibility of providing their son with a wife to serve him --to care for him, his household, and his children.

The recent large-scale and intensive efforts of the Chinese government to mechanize and industrialize the People's Republic of China has underscored the importance of education. For Chinese women to be able to contribute to their country's welfare, they require greater educational opportunities, since a lack of vocational skills and of literacy becomes a major obstacle to the

rational and efficient use of female labor. The Chinese government has understood that the creation of equal educational opportunities for the sexes is a crucial aspect of the process of modernization. Therefore, the government has adopted policies declaring women's equal rights to educational opportunities, to full participation in society with dignity. Article 48 of the nation's constitution states:

> Women in the People's Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, political, economic, cultural, and social, including family life.

With this introductory overview of the issue of gender and educational rights, we turn now to review the evolution of women's educational rights during four historical periods: (1) the era prior to the 1949, which is the year the Communist armed forces defeated the Nationalist (Kuomintang) forces on the mainland and established the People's Republic, (2) the 1949–1966 period, extending from the establishment of the People's Republic to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, (3) the decade of the Cultural Revolution, 1966–1976, and (4) the end of the Cultural Revolution to the present, 1976–1985.

## The Era Preceding 1949

Prior to 1949, Chinese women were educated in terms of the Three Obediences and the Four Virtues. The Three Obediences were: obey one's father before marriage, obey one's husband in marriage, and obey one's son in widowhood. The Four Virtues were: to have womanly looks, to behave according to the womanly virtues of subservience and chastity, to excel in womanly domestic arts, and to speak in a womanly manner. Overall, education was for subservience to others (Chen, 1977, p. 42).

In the founding of the First Republic in 1911, the government included among its primary goals modern education, equality of the sexes, and the application of a Western scientific approach to productive activities. A women's movement was initiated to win women's rights to be educated, to work, and to vote. In 1924 women's rights to equality were officially recognized in government policy statements, representing a turning point in the history of the women's movement in China.

With the beginning of the civil war between Chinese Nationalist and Chinese Communist forces in 1927, the women's movement took two divergent paths of development, with only the Communists recognizing the tremendous potential of women. Women's economic role was therefore redefined, their status in the family reevaluated, and their open participation in the village officially declared. A new self-image for women was being conceptualized (Chen, 1977, pp. 45–46).

## The 1949–1966 Period

In 1949 the civil war ended and mainland China became the People's Republic on October 1. As part of the social change in New China, the task of transforming women's position became intensified. The All-China Democratic Women's Federation, which later became the National Women's Federation, was established. The organization's main goal was to educate women to make use of their new political, social, and economic opportunities. In the report of the first Women's Congress in 1949, the main function of their council was described:

> We shall, by means of education, let women understand that men and women are born equal. We shall adequately criticize the feudal conception that women are inferior (Chen, 1977, p. 47).

The Women's Federation became greatly involved in literacy and cultural projects aimed at overcoming the officially recognized "backwardness" of Chinese women. Many women, particularly the young, benefited from the increase in educational opportunities, especially in rural areas where the oppression of women was, and continues to be, the greatest and where the traditional role of the women as exclusively a housewife and mother was so deeply established.

At the primary-school level, the proportion of females in schools increased from around 25 percent in 1949 to about 38 percent by 1958, and from about 20 percent to around 30 percent at the secondary level. The increase in the proportion of females to males was somewhat more rapid in general schools as contrasted to technical and specialized institutions. Apparently women constituted around 28 percent of graduates from all types of secondary schools during the 1949 to 1958 period.

In higher-education institutions, after a rise of about 4 percent between 1949 and 1952, the proportion of women enrolled remained unchanged until 1958. The explanation may be that the revolution which led to the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949 was accompanied by a great desire for rapid change, including the overturning of feudal Chinese society in order to create an ideal society with equality. But this initial fervor appeared to slowly fade after a few years, with traditional ideas about women's position in the society returning, thereby impeding the progress of the women's movement.

It is estimated that over the 1949-1958 era, women contributed 23 percent of the graduates from institutions of higher education. The highest proportion of women to men appeared in the fields of medicine and pharmacy, where they constituted over 40 percent of the student body, while in literature, arts, and education they constituted slightly more than 22 percent. The first figure represents a large increase over the pre-1949 period, while the latter represents a small decrease (Orleans, 1960, p. 145). Prior to 1949, medicine and pharmacy were mainly male-oriented fields, while after the Revolution these disciplines were open to women, resulting in a strong influx of women. In contrast, prior to 1949 women already had access to such fields as literature and art.

Women's opportunities to take advantage of the government's equal-access educational policies were restricted by their traditionally weak educational backgrounds and by men's attitudes toward them. Males in supervisory positions oftentimes would not teach female workers because they considered women incapable of mastering the skills necessary for participation in industrial jobs. This kind of discrimination frequently kept women in the lowest-level jobs and reinforced their sense of inferiority (Andors, 1983, p. 70).

The impact on employment of the "fortunate" women, who were getting an education, was not immediate, as they needed time to be trained. So the effects of the more advanced forms of training were not evident until the 1960s. By then, although female university graduates remained a significant minority, there were substantial numbers of women entering the labor force at different levels. For example, women constituted 40 percent of the doctors in Beijing and 25 percent of the researchers in the Chinese Academy of Sciences. However, most of these women came

from urban families.

A major difference between the rural and urban areas of the nation lies in the educational opportunities available. The advances made by urban women did not necessarily influence rural women to do the same. Peasant girls were still needed for housework and child care. Another factor playing against rural girls was the limited availability of educational facilities in the countryside, which meant that girls were passed over in favor of their brothers in school enrollment (Andors, 1983, p. 70).

By the 1960s, traditional pressures continued to have a strong influence on women who were still suffering from male dominance, since education was not yet free nor compulsory, and parents still looked to their sons rather than daughters to provide the parents satisfaction and prestige by means of career achievements.

Another cause of continued inequality of access to education was the limited support furnished to schools by the government. Though politically and socially, government policies (particularly during the ill-fated Great Leap Forward of 1958-1960) included the intention of raising women's participation in China's modernization while moving women to greater equality with men, the government and the Communist Party were more concerned with the economic goals than with the gender equality aspect of the mobilization policy (Andors, 1983, pp. 48-50).

Severe poverty and unemployment followed the unsuccessful Great Leap Forward. With jobs getting fewer, there was a reassertion of traditional social structures, and women were encouraged to go back into the home. Consequently, the effort to provide gender equality was quite neglected during the recovery period of 1961-1964. As Young (1973, p. 169) reports, the reality was still the persistence of male supremacy both within and outside the home.

In summary, it is clear that women remained in the minority in the educational system during the period 1949-1966 but, nevertheless, women as a class still made important advances. They had openly challenged traditional boundaries regarding their place in society, including their educational status. They were given access to literacy training and skill development, thus becoming able to take some degree of advantage of new job opportunities and to liberate themselves to an extent from feudal attitudes regarding women's roles.

## The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966-1976

The year 1966 ushered in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which resulted in rapid social change and was accompanied by intense ideological debates. The education of youth was one of the crucial issues raised.

For Mao Tse-Tung and his followers, the Cultural Revolution was an attempt to eliminate inequity between town and country, between manual and intellectual labor, between workers and peasants. So the Chinese educational system received great priority and attention as a result of complaints by students from poor and lower-middle-class peasant and worker families that they were being discriminated against and humiliated by the bourgeoisie-oriented educational system (Singer, 1971, p. 82). This started a real outburst against academic establishments. Schooling as a whole, but particularly at the college level, was greatly curtailed. The result, while not aimed

especially at women, was to greatly reduce opportunities for all Chinese youth. Teaching had ended in all schools and colleges by the summer of 1966 (Price, 1979, p. 267). Urban students were sent to the countryside to eat, live, and labor with the peasants. Elementary and middle schools stayed closed for one to two years, whereas universities and colleges remained inactive for two or three years, with some of them perhaps closed for up to ten years (Curtin, 1975, p. 50). Women, though only a minority of the nation's students, suffered the most since once more their progress toward equal access to education was impeded.

At the reopening of educational institutions, the percentage of women in the student body was no greater than before the Cultural Revolution. In 1971, it was estimated that women comprised 30 percent of the students at Beijing University (Curtin, 1975, pp. 50-51). If at the University of Beijing women were still underrepresented, then what must the situation have been in rural schools?

During the early 1970s, emerging guidelines for rebuilding the Communist Party emphasized not only production and economic growth but also the transformation of the society, including the advancement of women. There was a growing recognition of women's contribution to socialist development, with the focus on the necessity "to comply with Chairman Mao's great teaching to educate women so as to strengthen revolutionary unity and to understand that the women of new China are a force which 'determines' the victory or failure of the revolution" (Andors, 1983, p. 131).

As noted above, the emerging revolutionary policies were aiming at the gradual elimination of any historical inequality, including the oppression of women. The analysis of ideological roots of women's oppression gave rise to a special campaign against both Lin Biao (a Maoist leader) and the ancient seer, Confucius, who were openly classified as the oppressors of women. Confucian tradition was perceived as responsible for attitudes, values, and behavior inimical to socialist development (Andors, 1983, p. 126). Confucius earned the name "eater of women" because, according to his writings, women belong in the same category as slaves and inferior men, destined only for housework and reproduction. Consequently, there was no need for them to learn, to read, and to write (Kristeva, 1977, pp. 75). Lin Biao, a proponent of traditional ideas, was accused of advocating the primacy of family ties and the importance of familial responsibilities that kept women tied to the household. Both Lin Biao and Confucius were charged with denigrating independent achievements by women (Andors, 1983, p. 126).

While women in the new China were given a new identity and new opportunities to study and work, conservative male attitudes concerning the proper use of female labor still prevailed. These attitudes led men to still limit female opportunities for obtaining advanced training, acquiring skills, and finding better paying jobs. The male-dominated authority structure continued to be an obstacle to female equality, but the way for a better future was slowly being paved (Andors, 1983, p. 147).

As women became an increasingly large portion of the labor force, particularly in urban areas, their demands were accorded greater attention. By 1974, more men were beginning to understand why a social system that confined women to household chores and deprived them of opportunities to gain skills and participate in social and political affairs gave the impression that females lacked capabilities. In short, women appeared to lack skills precisely because they had been denied access to them.

The large-scale, intensive efforts at mechanization and industrialization that emerged in the mid-1970s underscored the importance of education. If women were to be able to contribute, the lack of educational opportunities for them, particularly in rural areas, had to be overcome. Thus, the Party made serious efforts to increase the number of women in schools at all levels. In many villages as high as 85 percent of girls and young women were not in school. In some communities, those children unable to attend school were all girls. Yet despite the obstacles to providing education for female peasants, the 1970s witnessed a great expansion in schools throughout the countryside. And an increasing quantity of girls received not only primary but also secondary education (Andors, 1983, pp. 144-146).

To sum up the achievements of this period, we can recognize that significant progress toward greater educational equality for women came in the early 1970s. By the mid-1970s, a substantial number of women had attained economic independence, with increasingly more on the road to higher education, demonstrating the contention that whatever men can do, women can do equally well.

## The Four Modernizations, 1976-1985

The era of the Cultural Revolution ended with the death of its prime mover, Mao Tse-Tung, in 1976. And a new approach to the women's question subsequently appeared in 1978, together with the new national-development approach called "the four modernizations" (industry, agriculture, science/technology, and military). Once more, women's roles were being reevaluated in terms of the country's development. Women were mobilized to support the new development policy, and unity between women and men was stressed, but only to promote economic productivity. The women's cause was identified with the nation's welfare, as during the Great Leap Forward, but not in terms women's own needs, that is, in terms of their struggle against inequality in all spheres of Chinese society, including education.

During the early post-Mao period of 1976-1978, with the economy unable to generate sufficient jobs for both women and men, women were strongly encouraged to engage in traditional female activities (child care, sewing, cooking). However, China had changed since 1949. Women were now getting more education so they were trained and recruited for jobs in agricultural, industrial, and collective sectors of the economy (Andors, 1983, pp. 150-154).

It took about five years, 1976-1981, for considerable progress to be made in meeting readjustment targets for the reconstruction of the economy. In the second year of the 1981-1985 national-development plan, a significantly higher proportion of women, ages 10-24, were literate than within the age range of 35 years and above, thus indicating improvement in the female literacy rate. By the early 1980s, 55 percent of the entire female population above age 10 were literate. However, there still was a significantly higher percentage of literate males (Shah, 1985, pp. 33-34, 43).

As in many countries, compared with the 1950s, women today are generally entering more and more areas formerly monopolized by men, and greater emphasis is placed on the professional education of women. In 1982 they contributed 42 percent of the trainees in technical schools and 33 percent of the nation's scientists, engineers, and technicians. However, in mainland China's best science university at Qinghua, only 16.5 percent of the student body were women, majoring in such fields as architecture, chemical engineering, computer engineering, physics, and mathematics

(Manni, 1982, pp. 24-25). This small proportion indicates either that women are still considered inferior and/or that they have an inferiority complex about studying science and engineering. In either case, there is still work to do if women are to win complete emancipation, meaning that a change of attitude among both men and women is necessary even though legally women are already ensured rights equal to those men enjoy.

## Conclusion

The key to women's emancipation is without doubt education. And since 1949, significant efforts, yielding good results, have been started in mainland China to solve the problem of illiteracy among women and to improve their educational opportunities. Chinese schools have increasingly started training both sexes to enter the same job market, thus providing women a more equal chance to compete for the available positions. By the mid-1980s, the People's Republic of China's economy had expanded and was achieving greater stability, providing more jobs for everyone, which bodes well for the women's movement.

However, today Chinese women still have fewer educational opportunities than men. Proportionately there are more males than females in schools at all levels of the educational ladder. In spite of the laws guaranteeing equality in 1949, along with the policies in the Communist Party's program and provisions in the nation's Constitution promising women the same rights as men in all areas of education, women's rights have not materialized as rapidly as could be wished. Traditions are difficult to change solely through legislation and policy commitments. The long Chinese heritage of a male-dominated and male-oriented society has continued to operate against women's equality, particularly when men fear that increasing the employment of women will put men out of work.

Consequently, Chinese women can look forward to a continuing struggle to reach the goal of complete emancipation. It can be expected that the success of the women's cause will depend partly on the success of the nation's economic-development program. Compared to the economies of industrially advanced countries, mainland China's economy is still backward. Thus the government's goal is to modernize, meaning the creation of more jobs as well as a revolution of ideas and traditions. Such modernization can be expected to favor women's emancipation. A close relationship between women's emancipation and economic progress was intended at the time of the Great Leap Forward in the late 1950s, but the failure of that economic plan resulted in women being "sent back to the kitchen." It is still too early to evaluate the impact that the four-modernizations will have on the nation's socioeconomic progress and on the women's movement. However, if the current economic vitality of the country is a valid indicator of what may be expected in years to come, there appears to be a good chance that economic conditions will continue to improve. And with such improvement, there is hope for a complete educational emancipation of Chinese women. Possibly women in Communist China are closer to enjoying equal rights with men than are women in most areas of the world.

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Table 1 : Percentage of Male and Female Students in Higher and Secondary Education Before and After 1949 .

| | Higher Educational Institutions | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | % | Female | % |
| Pre - 1949 | 102,000 | 82 | 23,000 | 18 |
| Post - 1949 | 385,000 | 77 | 115,000 | 23 |

| | Secondary Educational Institutions | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | % | Female | % |
| Pre - 1949 | 574,000 | 82 | 126,000 | 18 |
| Post -1949 | 1,872,000 | 72 | 728,000 | 28 |

* Source : Leo Orleans , " Professional Manpower and Education in Communist China , " p. 146 .

Table 2 : Percentage of Female Students in Total Number of Students .

| | Institutions of Higher Learning | Technical Middle Schools | Middle Schools | Primary Schools |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1949 | 17.8 | 21.1 | 20.0 | 25.5 |
| 1952 | 19.8 | 24.9 | 23.5 | 32.9 |
| 1957 | 23.9 | 26.5 | 30.8 | 34.5 |
| 1958 | 23.3 | 27.0 | 31.3 | 38.5 |

* Source : Phyllis Andors , " The Unfinished Liberation of Chinese Women - 1949 -1980 , " p. 43 .

Table 3 : China

| Data Series | 1975 | 1980 |
|---|---|---|
| Education at First Level | | |
| Pupils enrolled | 150,941,000 | 146,629,400 |
| of which Female ( % ) | 45 | 45 |
| Education at Second Level | | |
| Pupils enrolled | 45,368,000 | 55,778,000 |
| of which Female ( % ) | 39 | 39 |
| Education at Third Level | | |
| Students enrolled | 501,000 | 1,161,440 |
| of which Female ( % ) | ... | 23 |

* Source : Statistical Digest , 1983 , UNESCO .

Table 4 : Participation of Females in Education

| Educational Institution | % of Women Attending |
|---|---|
| Primary School | 50 |
| Middle School | 40 |
| Technical Schools | 42 |
| Spare - time College and Technical Schools | 30 |
| Trade Union Vocational Schools | 27 |
| Short - Term Training Courses | 30 |
| College and University | 30 |
| % of Women among those Officially Classified as Illiterate | 80 |

* Source : Elisabeth Croll , Chinese Women Since Mao , p.46 .

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Table 5 : Women Workers in Industry

| Type of Industry | % of Women Workers |
|---|---|
| Cotton Textile , Finance and Trade | 60 |
| Light Industry , Instruments and Meters | 50 |
| Post and Telecommunications , Chemical Industry , Banking , Petroleum , Heavyduty Machinery and National Defence | 30 |
| Agriculture and Forestry | 40 |
| Railway Communications , Geology and Civil Construction | 20 |
| Coal Mining | 18 |
| Metallurgy | 14 |

* Source : Elisabeth Croll , Chinese Women Since Mao , p. 44 .

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Figure 1 : Percentage Literate for Women and Men , by Age

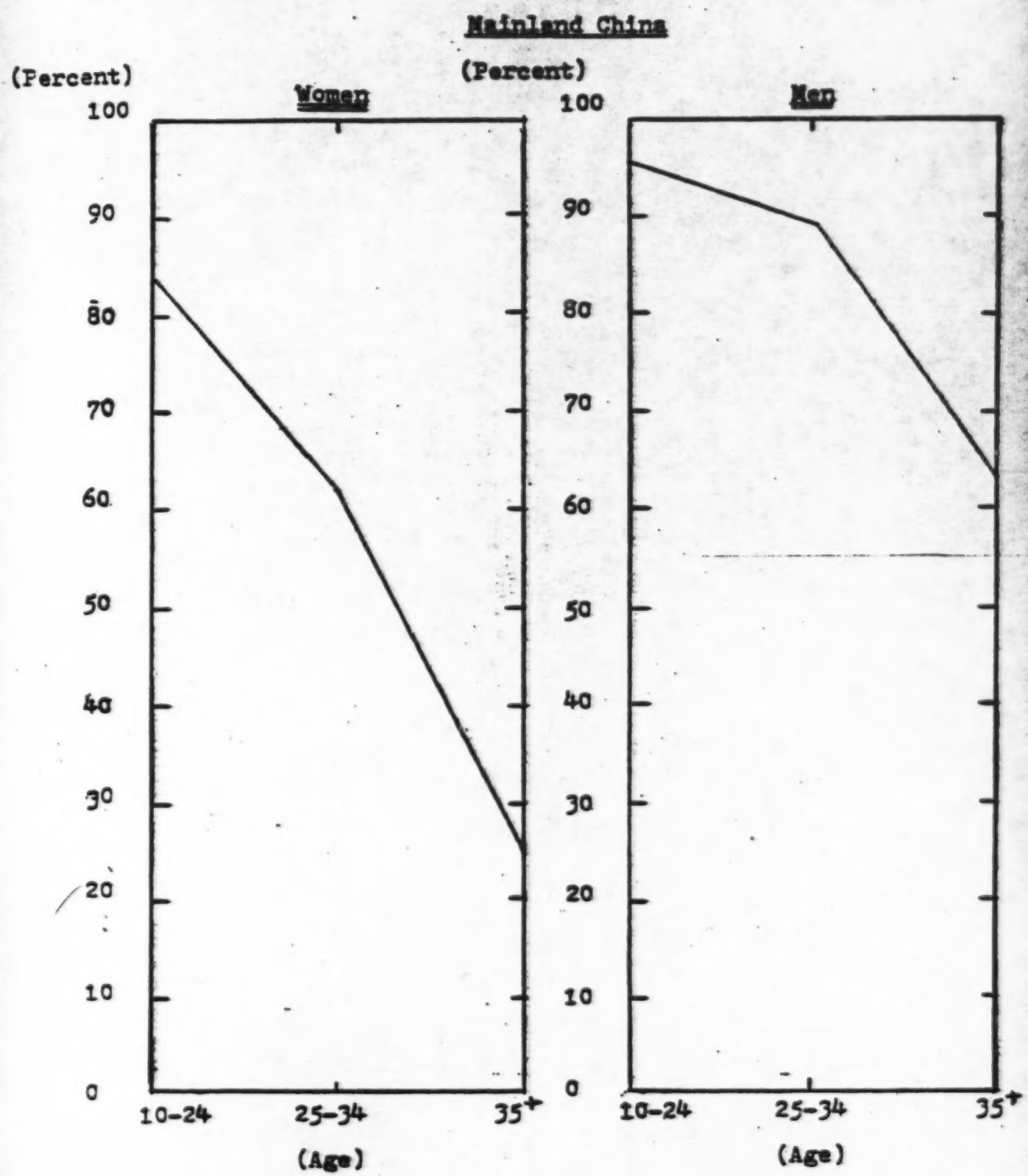
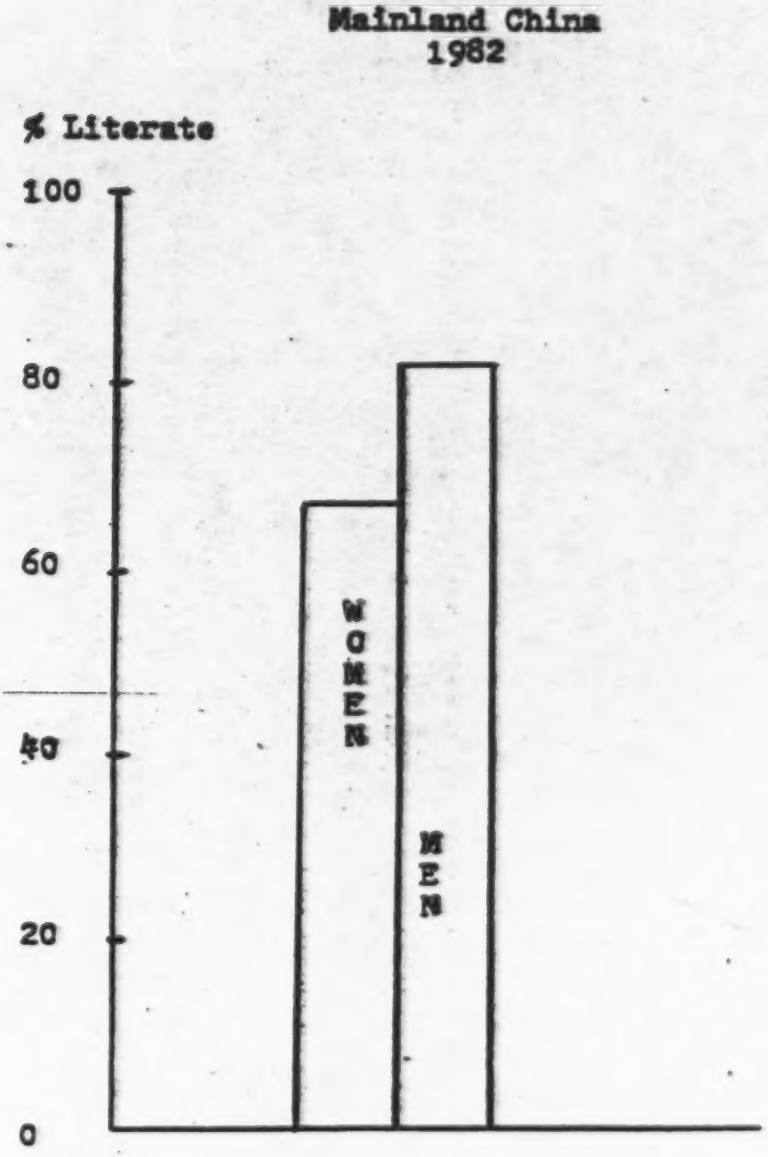


Figure 2 : Percent Literate Among Women and Men Age 10 Years and Over.



# Language Rights in the People's Republic of China

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When the matter of language rights in mainland China are considered, it is necessary to divide the discussion into two segments, one concerning spoken language and the other concerning written language. The reason for this is that written Chinese is not phonetic. Rather than being composed of symbols that reflect the sounds of spoken words, written Chinese is ideographic, consisting of ideograms that serve as symbols or characters representing ideas or meanings of things. As a consequence, our analysis of language rights from a dialectical perspective requires that we conceive of two pairs of conflicting interests, one pair for spoken language and the other for written language. As a preparation for understanding the nature of these two pairs of confrontations, we need to describe something of the background of language use in China. We begin with the matter of written Chinese, then consider people's rights in relation to spoken language.

## Written Chinese: An Ideographic Language

The ideograms that make up traditional written Chinese evolved from simple early drawings of such things as trees, mountains, the sun, and the like. Today the total number of ideograms exceeds 40,000, so large a quantity that not even the most learned scholars would recognize them all. Command over a far smaller number --perhaps 12,000 or so-- would be sufficient for a person to qualify as quite literate. The great advantage of ideographic writing over the centuries has been its lack of dependence on spoken dialect. In every region of China as well as in Korea and Japan, scholars could read documents written in ideograms, no matter what language they spoke. However, learning to read Chinese is a demanding educational exercise, since the characters must be rote memorized rather than "sounded out" by use of phonetic principles. While this memorization task may not be unreasonable for intellectual adept and interested learners who can dedicate years to the work, the attempt to prepare the entire populace to read traditional Chinese characters skillfully has proven to be very burdensome indeed. Therefore, the 20th century has witnessed the creation of a variety of schemes to simplify the task of reading and writing Chinese. Since the beginning of the People's Republic in 1949, this effort has taken two directions: (1) reducing the complexity of the traditional characters by eliminating certain lines in complicated ideograms, thereby decreasing the number of ideograms necessary for basic literacy and (2) abandoning the ideograms in favor of a romanized alphabet of two dozen or so phonetic symbols so that the sounds of words can be represented systematically by letter combinations, producing a phonetic script known as pin yin.

The dialectical confrontation regarding the written language in present-day mainland China is between: (1) the right of the masses of people to have a written language that can be mastered in a reasonable amount of time by nearly everyone in the land and (2) the right of scholars and the guardians of China's nearly 4,000 years of recorded history to equip people to read the traditional writings and fully comprehend the subtle meanings conveyed by complex characters.

The confrontation is not only between advocates of the traditional ideographs and proponents of reform, but also between the two camps of reformers --those supporting the simplification of the traditional characters and those advocating the adoption of a phonetic alphabet and abandonment

of ideographic writing. During the 1950s, the government supported efforts toward developing both the simplified characters and the pinyin phonetics. And today, the issue has still not been settled, although the simplification of characters would appear the more popular of the approaches at the moment. What the future holds is still a question.

### Spoken Chinese: The Putonghua Issue

The issue of rights regarding spoken language involves a very different dialectical controversy than that of written Chinese. We noted above that the groups involved in the confrontation over written Chinese would be (1) those who advocate a type of mass literacy that does not involve an inordinate amount of time for its mastery (simplify writing by either reducing characters or adopting a phonetic alphabet) and (2) traditional intellectuals or scholars (maintain the traditional characters). However, the groups in confrontation over the spoken-language issue are (1) advocates of a national spoken language, known as Mandarin or the major Han dialect that is native to the Beijing area of Northern China, and (2) people who speak a local or regional dialect or language. Such people are of two general types. One type consists of people of Han ethnic origin, which represent the major ethnic lineage of China. The other type consists of ethnic or national minorities, living primarily around the periphery of the nation, and representing about 6 percent of the total population. Although 6 percent is a small proportion of the populace, when translated into numbers of people it represents 60 million of the country's billion people, a very significant number, indeed.

Since 1949, the government has faced the problem of establishing a single spoken tongue to be used throughout the land as a key instrument for unifying the nation and, at the same time, recognizing the right --or at least the strong desire-- of minority language groups to maintain their own language. The government's efforts to promote the universal use of Mandarin or Han requires that mandatory lessons be given in the language. In other words, people of the minority language groups have no choice. Whether they like it or not, whether they deem it useful or not, they have to learn the national language. Consequently, even as minority groups may understand that national unity is promoted when everyone learns a common language, they still often resent the neglect of their native tongue and they struggle to maintain their traditional ways.

Government policy regarding the promotion of a national language has not changed much since 1949. The government has been firm in its resolve to have everyone learn the Hand dialect. However, over the past 35 years, particularly between the periods of the Cultural Revolution and the present-day Four Modernizations, there has been a significant difference in the administrators' view of the functional use of minority languages.

The nation's leadership under the Cultural Revolution opposed the use of minority language in any form --either traditional or revised-- if the languages were used to promote regional or ethnic attitudes or if they reflect traditional feudal or bourgeois attitudes. On the other hand, the debate that has emerged under the Four Modernizations since the mid-1970s centers on the value of traditional minority language forms precisely for purposes of maintaining ethnic identity rather than for functional use.

It seems that while the government continues its drive toward a "more national" national language, it must still reckon with the reality of groups of peoples intent on speaking tongues very different from each other's and seeking to maintain an oral literature in their native language

tradition.

## Conclusion

So it is that China today continues to experience two pairs of dialectical conflicts in people's perceptions of rights related to the learning and use of language (1) the written-language conflict between the traditionalists and the simplifiers and (2) the spoken-language conflict between the government seeking national unity by promoting the learning of a national tongue and people in minority-language regions who desire to maintain their native tongue for purposes of ethnic identity and ease of language-learning.

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# Teachers' Rights In The People's Republic Of China

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The objective of this paper is to analyze the issue of teachers', or more broadly, educators' rights in the People's Republic of China by seeing how these rights come into conflict with the perceptions of rights by other segments of society. In other words, we consider the dialectical relationship between educators' rights and the rights of other groups, particularly the rights of political leaders, students, and members of the lay community.

On the educators' side, theirs is a right to manage the educational establishment without interference on the part of other elements of the society. Educators deem themselves qualified to pursue knowledge and to disseminate it without the guidance of government officials, students, or other interested bodies. Educators also claim the right to receive respect from other members of the society and for a reasonable income.

On the government's side, theirs is the right to control the educational establishment as an essential instrument for achieving the nation's goals of building a socialistic society contolled by the proletariat.

While students, and other community members can represent still other perceptions of rights than those of teachers and the government, the following analysis will be limited to the dialectical inter-change between teachers as intellectual leaders in Chinese society and the Chinese Communist Party, for the confrontation of these two groups' perceptions of rights has been the most prominent of these sorts of concerns in China over the past 36 years.

It is useful to view this conflict of rights within three historical periods, those encompassing the years 1949-1966, 1966-1976, and 1976-to the present.

Chinese intellectuals have a hard time in the last 36 years, especially the teachers. They have experienced intense emotions, running the gamut from hope to disappoitment, humiliation and frustration.

## Period One: The Early Years 1949-1966

The 1st period is from 1949 to 1966, the period of remolding or reforming intellectuals. The teachers were judged according to their political-ideological qualifications before they become acceptable for service in the proletarian society. The Communist Party's Policy towards intellectuals was "uniting, educating and remolding". (Chen,1981) In fact, most of the time the teachers were educated and remolded by the working class and the Party in political and ideological field. They were distrusted and suspected and even looked down upon by some Party members. Most teachers, therefore, were cautious and skeptical, wondering what rights they had while waiting to be educated and remolded. During this period, the working class was the dominant class in Chinese society.

From May 2, 1956 to 1966, a slogan used to publicize the new method of dealing with teachers as intellectuals were, "let a hundred flowers blossom together, let a hundred schools contend". The slogan was designed to arouse the interests of Chinese intellectuals who seemed free to think and propose ideas for social, economic and political betterment. They were encouraged to speak up in forums. Educators protested that they had been given"positions without authority" because the actual authority in every school for making decisions on the curriculum, the promotions of students and teachers, and other matters was a resident representative of the Communist Party who symbolized the "leadership" and whose action no one dared question. Teachers in schools and universities testified that they lived in constant fear of the domineering cadres, fear of incuring of the displeasure of the "leadership" and the possible consequences that would follow, fear of being reported to the Party for lack of political activism and ideological laxity, and the like. Such fears served to reduce the professional effectiveness of educational workers. (Chen, 1981)

Condemnation and criticism of educational policy came in the midst of bold attacks against the regime and the Communist Party. There were enough dissatisfied educators to create a very volatile atmosphere and a general mood of hostility towards the Party. The authorities took quick and decisive action in the form of a counter-attack. The dissidents were denounced as Rightists. A nationwide anti-Rightist mass campaign was launched to exert group presure on the dissidents, not only to bring an end to their escalating protests and denunciating but also to devert the direction of mass emotions away from the Communist Party, the target of the outspoken critics, and to redirect the attacks toward the critics themselves.

The campaign was officially announced by the Party's newspaper, the People's Daily, in Peking on June 8, 1957, in a declaration that Rightist elements had set forth to overthrow the Communist Party, and the working class had no choice but to fight back.

Forums were organized by the government to refute the criticisms offered by the dissidents. Students spoke up against the deviants and rallies of workers and peasants helped create an atmosphere of mass indignation against the "enemies of revolutions". It did not take long for the outspoken intellectuals to realize that they had no defense agaigst the well organized and well supported counter-attack. One by one they succumbed. Some recanted and confessed that they had committed serious mistakes. Others acknowledged their need f for further ideological remolding to rectify their thinking. (Chen, 1981)

Period Two: The Cultural Revolution 1966-1976

The second period was from 1966-1976, the period of the Cultural Revolution. By the start of the Cultural Revolution, feelings of outrage often ran high, particularly among students. Not all young people, even among those who were doing well in the university,

had been co-opted by the Party. Millions felt themselves victims of oppressive and unreasonable school practices, and, to many, all these had been perpetrated by teachers. While Mao Tse-tong and the rest of the revolutionary leadership made it clear at the outset of the Cultural Revolution that the conscious and highly placed perpetrators of revisionism, it took time for some students to see the larger picture. Before then they saw their job to be a struggle against revisionism whenever it existed, and many were convinced that they had found it when they looked to the front of the classroom. Although many teachers thought that what they had been doing was in the best interests of their students and the society, and few among them, as it later turned out, were genuine "capitalist-roaders," criticism was nonetheless sharp, often relentless, and sometimes unjust.

The Party's criticism of teachers unquestionably shook large numbers of them from their prior smugness and self-satisfaction. They were forced to questionhhow they had taught and why, what was wrong with their teaching and with themselves. So, in a way, the teachers were being educated by their students.

Like the learning that took place during the movements before the Cultural Revolution, however, this was not education as it is usually conceived, the kind of education that implies initial exposure to new experiences and ideas without the prior existence of contradictory ones to obstruct the smooth flow of learning. Teachers did have obstructions in their minds, and they are many and formidable. The process they were undergoing was precisely re-education, which is what the government called it. To accept the new ideology, they had to rid themselves of the old one, a difficult, elusive, and at times even painful process. There were no "blank sheet" that had simply to be filled; the sheet were already full of "erroneous ideas"; they had to be rewritten with fresh ideas while at the same time erasing the old ones.

Perhaps the most difficult part of the re-education process had to do with the content itself, the two sets of ideas, one that needed to be dropped and one that was to be embraced. It is not simply inaccuracy of facts and information, or superficiality of interpretations that create the hidden assumptions and attitudes that fully embroider the most seemingly incidental thoughts and actions and colour a myriad to the world, including ideas of each person's place in it. These have to be dredged up and confronted, examined and understood, criticized and in a great many cases rejected. To create a new world required no less than a transformation of the very essence of one's mind, the very foundation of one's conduct. One's total ideology must be remolded.

Chinese officials often speak of the need to "rectify erroeous ideas." A foreiner might well want to know who is to say what ideas are erroneous. The Chinese leaders would answef that by erroneous ideas they are referring to those that are causing disservice to the people and those ideas, therefore, only the people can judge. Officials would perhaps point to the Culture Revolution as a good example of people on a massive scale deciding which ideas were

erroneous and waging battle against them.

While phrases like "rectify erroneous ideas" and "re-education" are foreign to people in many societies and make them at best uncomfortable, "ideological remolding" can be downright frightening. It can easily trigger off images of thought control and brainwashing. None of these terms are frightening to the Chinese leadership, which is why officials have no hesitation in using them. As they see it, all people, whether they like it or not, are molded in the first place, regardless of whether the molding is consciously and purposefully perpetrated or not. We all develop ideologies, and these are shaped by the economic, social, and political conditions that obtain in whatever society we happen to live in and by our own particular class position within that society. Our actions as well as our outlooks derive from our experiment. To the Chinese, that is a universal fact of human existence.

The only question they would ask is: what ideology has been learned, one that is for the interests of the people or against them? For example, the Chinese would undoubtedly frown upon that kind of molding which teachers wear short skirts one year, long skirts the next, and pants the next. They would call such attitudes bourgeois because they serve the interests not of the skirt and pant wearers but of the manufacturers. They would also say that the creation of such "needs" and the means and media through which they are inculcated are instruments used by the capitalists to separate the people from their own real interests by developing in them an individualistic and hence divisive mentality; that such a process is aimed at encouraging people to look upon themselves as special and better than others, and to compete for esteem and status; that the collective interest is sacrificed for the sake of the profit that goes to the few.

Remolding is deemed essentic. The students have played and continue to play a role in the ideological re-education of their teachers. But this has not been without its shortcomings. Students by themselves could not be expected to typify and teach the new proletarian ideology when they too were largely cut off from the proletariate as so many of them were before the Cultural Revolution.

Only the working people could remold ideologies in a proletarian direction. With the formation of the school revolutionary committees from 1967 onward, workers and peasants assumed more direct and influential positions in running the schools. When teachers had to sit down with them and trash out educational problems jointly, many began to see things from a new perspective. However, ideological remolding is a continuing process, each new insight builds on others, and they must all become operative. If a teacher agrees with a new idea only intellectually and then persists in conducting his daily affairs in the same old way, the Chinese leaders would consider that his ideology has essentially been untouched. Outlooks are remolded by changed behaviour every bit as much as behaviour is remolded by changed outlooks. Therefore, the successful remolding of teachers' ideologies requires appropriate change in their practice.

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Besides, teachers have also suffered low political and social status along with low pay. Disrespect for teachers became widespread during the Cultural Revolution when school teachers, like their college counterparts, were labelled politically undesirable and called the "ninth most stinking group". They were beaten up, cursed and in most cases unjustly critisized. Some were forced to the countryside for "re-education" by poor and middle-class peasants.

Period Three: Improvement 1976-1985

The 3rd period is from 1976 to 1985, a period of improving the teachers' situation. The Party's policy during this period has been changed as "to respect knowledge and talent". The political leaders really want to take care of the teachers and take measures to solve their problems. They realized the teachers' position should be one of the most admired jobs in the society. Their salaries should be a bit higher than those of other positions, even if they have had the same education. They will have larger houses than those in other positions. Their working conditions and living situations will be highly improved. They will be encouraged both in spirit and in material ways and helped to solve their practical problems.

For a long time teachers have been regarded as "engineers of the human spirit" and "hard-working gardeners". But why, then, is the job of teaching not attractive? Why haven't teachers' activities been put into full play? Why in some places there are still cases of looking down upon and even cursing and beating teachers? Because there is still shortage of certain measures taken to enhance teachers' social importance. For example, there is no educational law to guarantee teachers' rights.

According to China's situation, how can the teachers' social status be raised? I believe that the most important thing is to raise their financial status. For a long time, teachers' salaries were quite low. The average salaries of teachers' was next to the bottom in 1980 and actually the bottom in 1983 among all the government-directed occupations in China.

Whereas, manual workers have bonuses added to their salaries, but teachers do not. So there is a big income gap between teachers and people in other occupations. Sometimes a worker's salary is three times as much as a teacher's. The standard salary ranks of teachers' should be as follows:

| Univ Ranks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amont(yuan) | 345 | 287.5 | 241.5 | 207 | 177 | 149.5 | 126.5 | 106 | 89.5 |

| Title | Professor | Associate-professor | Lecturer |
|---|---|---|---|

| Univ Ranks | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amont(yuan) | 78 | 69 | 62 | 56 |

But according to Mr He Lu Ye Xin's investigation in 1980, among 141 professors, there were 3.5% of them whose salary rank did not agree with their positions. Among 790 Assisstant Lecturers, their salaries are around 56 yurn. Among the newly chosen lecturers, 648 belong to Rank 12, 46 to 13. Among newly raised Associate Professors 68 belong to Rank 10, 16 to 11, 2 to 12.

The poor pay and low status of the teaching profession has discouraged senior middle school graduates from enrolling in teachers' colleges. As a result, some teachers' colleges are having trouble filling their classes. If things go on like this, China won't have enough qualified teachers in 10 years. "Inadequate enrollment in teachers' colleges will hurt the quality of future teachers and consequently harm the modernization of programme," said Chen Yun, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau who has called for an improvement in the teachers' situation. "Effective measures should be taken to improve teachers' housing and social status. Teaching should be the most respected and admired profession in society." said Chen.

Improvement And Future:

There has, indeed, been some improvement in the teachers' situation over the past few years. In 1983 more than 230 million yuan was earmarked to build 1.5 million square meters of housing for teachers. A campaign is now under way in many provinces and cities to encourage students to respect their teachers. In some places good teachers are selected as models in an effort to reward the talented and cultivate respect.

In sum, through the losses and backwardness China has had, the Party leaders have realized the fatal wounds and bitter lessons aroused by the ignorance and negligence of intellectuals, more precisely, the educators. Measures to solve the problems have been placed on the agenda of the day. Whether they can be excecuted well also awaits the co-operation of the leading body at the basic level and all other elements of the society. The situation is hopeful.

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